

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----114501 161728Z /47

O 161602Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8051
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
/AMEMBSSY PARIS 752
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION UN
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY SUVA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 DAMASCUS 2833

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: UNSC, LE, IS, XF
SUBJ: ASSUALTS ON UN FORCES IN SOUTHERN LEBANON

REF: USUN 1906; STATE 117862

SUMMARY: CHARGE DISCUSSED WITH DEPFONMIN QADDUR MAY 16
NEGATIVE EFFECT PALESTINIAN-UNIFIL CLASHES WERE HAVING ON
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IMPLEMENTATION OF UNSC RES 425. URGED SARG USE ITS INFLUENCE
WITH PALESTINIANS TO CALM SITUATION IN SOUTH. QADDUR
AFFIRMED SYRIA TRYING TO FACILITATE UNIFIL TASK WHICH
WAS COMPLICATED BY NAY DIFFERENT ELEMENTS INCLUDING
CHRISTIAN FORCES IN SOUTH, ISRAELI "PRECONDITIONS,"
UNCONTROLLED PALESTINIAN ELEMENTS AND ABSENCE OF LEBANESE GOVT.
FORCES IN SOUTH. KEY TO STOPPING INFILTRATION, HE SAID,

WAS RAPID ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. AFTER WITHDRAWAL, QADDUR HINTED, SYRIA MIGHT BE WILLING TO SEEK NEW FORMULA TO GOVERN LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. MET WITH DEPFONMIN QADDUR MAY 16 TO DISCUSS ONGOING PROBLEMS OF UNIFIL IN ITS EFFORT TO CARRY OUT UNSC MANDATE TO SECURE RAPID ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH LEBANON AND HELP RESTORE LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY AND AUTHORITY IN THE AREA. TOLD QADDUR THAT THIS TASK, WHICH I BELIEVED BOTH OUR GOVERNMENTS SUPPORTED, WAS BEING COMPLICATED BY CONTINUING CLASHES BETWEEN UNIFIL AND PALESTINIAN GROUPS AND ATTEMPTS BY PALESTINIAN ARMED ELEMENTS TO INFILTRATE UN LINES AS WELL AS FIRING FROM BEAUFORT CASTLE AND OTHER PLACES ON BOTH ISRAELI AND CHRISTIAN POSITIONS. THIS UNSTABLE SITUATION HAD AT LEAST TWO NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES: IT HAD MADE SOME GOVERNMENTS HESITATE TO COMMIT FORCES TO UNIFIL; AND IT HAD MADE ISRAELIS MORE RELUCTANT TO COMPLETE THEIR WITHDRAWAL. IN THIS SITUATION WE WISHED TO URGE SARG TO USE WHATEVER INFLUENCE IT HAD WITH PALESTINIANS TO CALM SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON SO UN COULD IMPLEMENT ITS TASK. I ALSO REFERRED TO RECENT PRESS STATMENTS BY ARAFAT (ABU DHABI 1346) AND ZUHAYR MUHSIN IN BEIRUT MAGAZINE MONDAY MORNING AS THE SORT OF PALESTINIAN ACTIONS WHICH POSED ADDITIONAL DIFFICULTIES FOR UNIFIL. I ALSO MENTIONED THAT US WAS PRESSING ISRAELIS TO ANNOUNCE A FIRM DATE FOR THEIR COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH UNSC RES 425.

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2. IN REPLY, QADDUR ACKNOWLEDGED THT CURRENT STATE OF TENSION HAD RESULTED FROM CLASHES BETWEEN CERTAIN PALESTINIANS AND UN FORCES. HE STATED THAT CURRENT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AND UNIFIL WAS A COMPLICATED ONE. PRESENCE OF PALESTININANS IN LEBANON WAS RULED BY MANY CONSIDERAATIONS, AMONG THEM FACT THAT LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN HLATIONS WERE GOVERNED BY CAIRO ACCORDS AND RIYADH AND ALGIERS SUMMIT RESOLUTIONS.

3. QADDUR SAID THERE WERE VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS AND UNDERSTANDINGS OF UNSC RES 425 AND EXTENT OF UNIFIL MANDATE. UNIFIL INTERPRETATION APPEARED TO DIFFER FROM THAT OF SOME PALESTINIANS. HE SAID HE HAD NOT SEEN ARAFAT OR MUHSIN INTERVIEWS TO WHICH I REFERRED. HE ASKED WHETHER I COULD LEAVE MUHSIN STATEMENT WITH HIM. (LATER, HE ASKED FOR ARAFAT STATMENT AS WELL.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8052
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4. QADDUR ASSERTED THAT IF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM
LEBANON WERE COMPLETED, THERE WOULD THEN BE NO NEED
FOR PALESTINIANS TO INFILTRATE OR TO FIRE ON ISRAELI
TROOPS. SYRIA AGREED THAT UNIFIL HAD MANDATE TO SUPERVISE
WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES AND ASSIST IN RESTORATION
OF LEBANESE AUTHORITY
IN SOUTH. WHEN LEBANESE AUTHORITY
WAS REESTABLISHED, THEN RELATIONS BETWEEN LEBANESE AND
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PALESTINIANS WOULD BE RULED BY EXISTING AGREEMENTS. IF
AT THAT TIME, HOWEVER, THE NEED AROSE TO REVISE SOME OF
THESE AGREEMENTS THEY COULD BE REVISED, QADDUR AFFIRMED.

5. QADDUR SAID SARG UNDERSTOOD THAT UNIFIL TASKS WERE COMPLICATED AND DIFFICULT. HE SAID THAT SYRIA HAD BEEN FACILITATING THESE TASKS AND HAD AGREED, FOR EXAMPLE, TO RECEIVE AMERICAN AIRLIFT OF SENEGALESE FORCES. GEN. SIILASVUO HAD EXPRESSED TO HIM UN'S APPRECIATION FOR SYRIA'S EFFORTS DURING HIS VISIT LAST WEEK. QADDUR SAID HE WOULD BRING US CONCERNS TO ATTENTION OF FONMIN KHADDAM AND OTHER SYRIAN AUTHORITIES ASAP.

6. QADDUR THEN ASKED AS A PRACTICAL MATTER HOW INDIVIDUAL INFILTRATION EFFORTS COULD BE HALTED. EVEN PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP WAS NOT ABLE TO CONTROL INDIVIDUAL REJECTIONISTS. BEST COURSE, QADDUR ASSERTED, WOULD BE TO ELIMINATE THE PROVOCATION BY BRINGING ABOUT RAPID ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL UNDER UNSC RES 425. DELAY IN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, COUPLED WITH FURTHER ISRAELI INTRANSIGENT STATEMENTS AND "PRE-CONDITIONS" WOULD ONLY RAISE TENSIONS FURTHER. QADDUR SAID HE ASSUMED US WAS DISCUSSING WITH ISRAELI LEADERSHIP NEGATIVE EFFECT SUCH STATEMENTS WERE HAVING ON SITUATION.

7 REPLIED THAT WE AGREED IT WAS AN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT AND PERHAPS IMPOSSIBLE TASK TO STOP INFILTRATION BUT IF PRINCIPAL PARTIES INVOLVED, INCLUDING UN FORCES, SYRIAN AND LEBANESE GOVERNMENTS AND RESPONSIBLE PALESTINIAN LEADERS WORKED TOGETHER THEY COULD SURELY MINIMIZE INDIVIDUAL INFILTRATION AND REDUCE THE DANGER. QADDUR NODDED IN AGREEMENT BUT NOTED THAT THE EXISTENCE OF SO MANY ELEMENTS INCLUDING HADDAD, SHIDIAC, ISRAELIS, UNCOTROLLED PALESTINIANS AND THE ABSENCE OF LEBANESE
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FORCES IN THE SOUTH ALL COMPLICATED THE SITUATION. SETTING AN EARLY DATE FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL WOULD HELP GREATLY TO SOLVE CURRENT DIFFICULTIES.

9. NOTED THAT WHILE US DID NOT ACCEPT EFFECTIVE UNIFIL CONTROL OF AREA IT HAD TAKEN OVER AS A PRE-CONDITION FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, THERE WAS AS A PRACTICAL MATTER A CONNECTION BETWEEN UNIFIL'S EFFECTIVENESS AND ISRAEL'S ATTITUDE. IN ADDITION, LOOKING BEYOND ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE LONG-TERM SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON BECOME STABILIZED AND NOT OFFER ANY PRETEXT FOR RENEWED ISRAELI ACTION. QADDUR SAID HE UNDERSTOOD BOTH THESE POINTS. AFTER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, HE SAID, A FORMULA MIGHT BE FOUND WHICH WOULD TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE INTERESTS OF ALL PARTIES. BUT TO DEVELOP SUCH A FORMULA IN ADVANCE OF WITHDRAWAL WOULD MEAN AGREEING TO PRE-CONDITIONS AND BOTH SYRIA AND US TOOK THE POSITION THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO PRE-CONDITION TO ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL.

10. COMMENT: IT SEEMS CLEAR FROM TONE OF QADDUR'S REMARKS AS WELL AS FONMIN KHADDAM'S RECENT STATEMENTS TO AMBASSADOR MURPHY AND TO ME THAT SYRIANS ARE SYMPATHETIC TO UNIFIL'S PROBLEMS AND ARE READY TO ASSIST IN URGING THOSE PALESTINIAN GROUPS WITH WHICH THEY HAVE INFLUENCE TO COOPERATE WITH UN. QADDUR'S INDICATION THAT SYRIA HAS BEGUN TO THINK ABOUT SOME REVISION OF LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN ACCORDS FOLLOWING ISRAELI'S WITHDRAWAL IS ALSO A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT.

11.HAVE JUST RECEIVED STATE 123903 (NOTAL INSTRUCTING ME TO SEE FONMIN KHADDAM AND MAKE SEVERAL OF THE SAME POINTS I MADE THIS AFTERNOON TO QADDUR. BEFORE PROCEEDING, REQUEST DEPARTMENT REVIEW TODAY'S DISCUSSION WITH QADDUR TO DETERMINE WHETHER IT CALLS FOR ANY CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO MY TALKING POINTS.

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Message Attributes

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